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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD submitted by Ralph F. Calistro in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. This purpose will be carried out in a two-fold manner. First, the structure of the work as Hegel outlines it will be investigated. From this investigation a general interpretive framework will be formulated. Second, after the interpretive framework is presented, an investigation of a part of the content of the Phenomenology will be conducted. This latter investigation will test the validity of the interpretive framework as formulated. This two-fold exposition and analysis of Hegel's text will be supplemented by two other analyses, one preliminary and the other complementary. First, two notions basic to Hegel's philosophy will be discussed. Such a discussion is necessary for the completion of the first task mentioned above, i.e., the formulation of an interpretive structure. Second, a discussion of an important commentator on Hegel will be presented. Such a discussion will highlight the nature of a particular segment of Hegel's philosophy which has an important bearing on the interpretation of the Phenomenology. The principal points of the thesis will be summarized in the last chapter.



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## Chapter I

A work of such magnitude as Hegel's Phaenomenologie des Geistes creates many difficulties for one who wishes to discuss certain aspects of it. Of course, there are the usual difficulties in attempting to discuss any work which treats of so much in so many different ways. But in this particular case there is an added difficulty. In discussing any work of Hegel, one soon becomes aware of something very characteristic of Hegel's philosophy, viz., the essential interconnectedness of the elements in his works. For example, in order to fully comprehend Hegel's Phen. one must know what he was trying to do in his earlier works and also what he did in his later works. In this particular case, one is faced with the task of trying to make sense out of particular parts of the Phen. without at the same time discussing at great lengths all the important parts of it. With this handicap in mind, however, I will try to describe and analyze the method of exposition that Hegel undertakes in the Phen. There are two points that have to be mentioned here at the start in the context of a "methodology" in the Phen.

First, one must not be misled by the word, 'methodology'. Hegel did not sit down and write out a formula that could be used again and again to "crank-out" philosophical propositions. Rather one must look at the "methodology"





of the Phen. in terms of a "manner of exposition". In other words, the principal concern of this thesis will be the way in which Hegel "exposes" the content of the Phen. This means that the structure of the Phen. will be as much of a concern in this thesis as will be Hegel's manner of exposition, in that the manner of exposition will be reflected in the structure of the work.

Second, such an analysis of the Phen., i.e., in terms of the methodology that Hegel uses, may seem redundant to some, in that scores of commentators have already discussed the Phen. and its methodology. However, I have not found any thorough-going analysis of Hegel's method of exposition as he himself describes it and as he employs it in the Phen. The work that comes closest to such an endeavor is Dove's work (see Bibliography). But even he has not attempted to present Hegel's method in a quasi-symbolic representation. And, as a result, I think that his analysis does not underscore the necessity which Hegel talked about in the Phen. In essence, then, this thesis will be an attempt to describe and clarify the method of exposition of Hegel's Phen. and to compare what he plans to do in the Phen. with what he actually does do. The question with which one is now concerned is the manner in which this attempt will be made.

The second chapter of this thesis will deal with Hegel's notion of "Spirit" and "Absolute" in an introductory fashion. Also, a discussion of the reasons that Hegel has for writing



the Phen. will be included. Such a two-fold discussion will be necessary for two reasons. First, as we shall see, a discussion of the reasons that Hegel has for writing the Phen. is necessary because Hegel believes that these reasons lead him to adopt a particular manner of exposition. And, secondly, in order to understand these reasons, one must have an elementary grasp of the notions of "Absolute" and "Spirit".

After this preliminary chapter, I plan to describe in detail the method of exposition that Hegel sets forth in his Introduction to the Phen. With the essentials of the method described, I then will analyze a few sections of the Phen. in order to discover Hegel's actual exposition. In this work I will discuss only the three sections at the beginning of the Phen., viz., the sections on Sense-Certainty, Perception, and Understanding. There are two reasons for discussing these three sections. First, in a work of this size, it is necessary to limit the number of sections that are studied in order to adequately describe each one. And, in order to facilitate the reader's comprehension of Hegel's exposition, I will concentrate on the aforesaid sections which presuppose no other sections, as they are the first three in the body of the work.

The next chapter will deal with an important commentator of Hegel, Alexandre Kojève. A discussion of Kojève is important because he too, as I will in this thesis, talk about a phenomenological method of exposition in Hegel's



Phen. However, in this chapter I want to show that Kojève misinterprets Hegel in some important ways. Finally, there will be a summary of the main points of this thesis.



## Chapter II

In reviewing the progress of the Phen. in the last section of the book, Hegel points out to what the content of the Phen. has led. "This last embodiment of Spirit which at once gives its complete and true content the form of self, and thereby realizes its  $\angle$ concept $\angle$ , and in so doing remains within its own  $\angle$ concept $\angle$  -- this is Absolute Knowledge. It is Spirit knowing itself in the shape of Spirit, it is knowledge which comprehends through concepts."<sup>1</sup> This passage in the Phen. contains two concepts essential for analyzing Hegel's purpose for writing the book: "Absolute Knowledge" and "Spirit". The concept "Absolute Knowledge", which is also called "the level of the Absolute", tells us something about the end point of the Phen.; viz., that the Phen. culminates in a certain type of knowledge, a knowledge which is Absolute. So in a sense Hegel in the Phen. is engaged in a type of epistemology; i.e., he wants to tell us something about the nature of knowledge as it is realized in Absolute Knowledge. He wants to show us that knowledge can be actual only as a system of science.<sup>2</sup> In other words, he wants to tell us something about science, i.e., knowledge of what is absolutely true.<sup>3</sup> Hegel discusses the nature of this science, the nature of Absolute Knowledge, in the Introduction to his Science of Logic.





Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought. As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known /concept/ and the /concept/ as such is the absolute truth of being.<sup>4</sup>

This quotation from Hegel gives us the important information about the standpoint of the Absolute, i.e., Absolute Knowledge. This type of knowledge presupposes "the liberation from the opposition of consciousness." This means that for this level of knowledge there is no object beyond it which thought must come to.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see when the body of the Phen. is discussed, at each level of consciousness in the Phen. below this level of the Absolute, a particular consciousness always approaches its object as something completely given to it, and thus completely beyond it. Such a consciousness examines its object as something just there before it. And when the object changes under the examination, the particular consciousness sees a change only in its object. It does not see a change in itself. Rather, we the observers see the change in the particular consciousness. Now, when consciousness reaches the level of the Absolute, it discovers that the object that it was investigating was an object which was as much itself as it was object. In other words, the object at any particular level of consciousness was really an object-for-a-



particular-consciousness. Another way of putting this would be that the object of thought is always thought's own other. There is not an object beyond thought which thought has to approach. Or rather, there is an object of thought, but it is always an object-of-thought. And it is this essential connection between thought and object (i.e., "thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought") that is the Absolute, the unity of being and thought.

This description of Absolute Knowledge, however, may lead one to think that Hegel is offering us a blatant sort of relativism. Since an object of thought is always an object-of-thought, i.e., since the object is always fashioned or tailored to the particular thought which approaches it, it seems that one can never really criticize or judge any particular expression of thought. It seems that we can never judge such an expression of thought by comparing it to its object, because the object is always fashioned by the particular thought. But in order to exonerate Hegel from this charge of relativism and in order to clarify this notion of the unity of being and thought, let us look at the Introduction to his Encyclopedia. Here he discusses one of his famous dicta.

In the preface to my Philosophy of Law  
... are found the propositions "What is  
/rational/ is actual;" and, "What is actual



is [rational]" ... As regards the logical bearings of the question, it is necessary to point out that existence is in part mere appearance and only in part actuality. In common life, any freak of fancy, any error, evil and everything of the nature of evil, as well as everything degenerate and transitory existence whatever gets in a casual way the name of actuality. But even our ordinary feelings are enough to forbid casual (fortuitous) existence getting the emphatic name of an actual; for fortuitous we mean an existence which has no greater value than that of something possible, which may as well not be as be.<sup>6</sup>

Hegel is pointing out that there are really two different sorts of objects. There are existing objects which are individual, isolated entities, and there are actual objects which are objects that have been brought into existence by thought. They have been made intelligible by thought; they have become objects-of-thought. Thus in one sense thought does approach an object which is just there before it. But as thought begins to consider such an object, it becomes an object-of-this-particular-thought. In other words, the object becomes an actualized object. Thus, as is implied in this description of the unity of being and thought, Hegel's claim that this unity constitutes knowledge of the absolutely true opposes the claim that there is always a residual object beyond thought. Hegel opposes the view that thought and being remain radically separated. And the Phen. is in part an attempt to refute this latter claim.

The other concept that is essential for the discussion of Hegel's purpose for writing the Phen. is the concept of





"Spirit". As mentioned previously, this concept of Spirit presents problems for an interpretation of Hegel. For an adequate discussion of the notion of "Spirit" would demand a lengthy treatment all by itself. Tentatively, however, it seems that "Spirit" means something like "spirit of the times" or "culture", or, more precisely, "the unifying thread of culture through history".<sup>7</sup> Spirit is essential for Absolute Knowledge because it is through Spirit in its present form (i.e., in Hegel's time) that the nature of Absolute Knowledge has been revealed. In other words, one can now know of the truth of the unity of being and thought because it is actually present in the culture of Hegel's time. But this leads us now into a consideration of how one can attain knowledge of the Absolute, and this is to be done by analyzing the Preface of the Phen.

Let us begin then with the study of the Preface of Hegel's Phen. in order to determine how it is possible to attain the standpoint of the Absolute. As we have just seen, Hegel's principal concern as philosopher is the attainment of science, i.e., the knowledge of what is absolutely true. He asserts this view in opposition to those who think that it is impossible for philosophy to reach the level of science, i.e., the level of the Absolute. These skeptics point to the dissension between the different philosophies throughout history. Hegel answers their objections with an argument that can be validated only in the Phen. proper (because





as we shall see, the Phen. deals with the relationship between types of knowledge).<sup>8</sup> Hegel points out that those who hold this skeptical view of philosophy are looking at the history of philosophy with very rigid notions of true and false. On the contrary, Hegel argues that one ought to look at the development of philosophical systems as an inherently organic process. It is this relationship of philosophical systems that prevents one from treating all previous systems as false. Rather, their falsity is a positive aspect in the history of philosophical thought and thus is essential to the whole of the history of philosophy. (This belief in the positive aspects of past philosophy appears to be at this point a mere assertion on Hegel's part. It really can be "justified" only by a description of the nature of human thought. And this will be done in the Phen. itself.)

But to return to our main point, we said that Hegel wants to show us what the knowledge of the absolutely true is. And the question we are now dealing with is: How is it possible for one to attain this knowledge? Hegel points out two necessities that are at work that enable one to reach the level of the Absolute.<sup>9</sup> The first one, which he calls an inner necessity, is grounded in the nature of knowledge itself. This necessity will be discussed later in conjunction with the discussion of Hegel's method. The second necessity is an external one.<sup>10</sup> This latter necessity



refers to the history of Spirit, for Spirit has passed through the stages of consciousness that are presented in the Phen. And at the present moment, i.e., the level of culture in Hegel's time, Spirit has reached that level whereby it is possible for one to attain knowledge of the Absolute. Indeed, it is necessary that Spirit be at that level in order for one to attain knowledge of the Absolute. (This implies, of course, that the Absolute was inaccessible before Hegel's time.)

But if Spirit has reached the level of the Absolute, then any person living at the time of Hegel (and perhaps by extrapolation, anyone living after Hegel) is living at the level of the Absolute. But then, why do any of us have to attain knowledge of the Absolute after all, since we are already at the level of the Absolute? How can we possibly attain what we already possess? This attainment is what some of Hegel's predecessors have assumed, but Hegel argues in a number of different ways for the need of having to attain the Absolute. In regard to his predecessors, and it is perhaps against Schelling that this is primarily intended, Hegel points out:

To study anything as it is in the absolute here means merely that one says of it: to be sure, it has just been spoken of as something, but in the absolute, the  $A=A$ , there is nothing of the sort, for in the absolute everything is one. To pit this one piece of information, that in the absolute all is one, against all the distinctions of knowledge, both attained knowledge and the search for knowledge --



or to pass off one's absolute as the night in which, as one says, all cows are black -- that is the naïveté of the emptiness of knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

For Hegel Absolute Knowledge is the most comprehensive form of knowledge which includes or "accounts for" all other types of knowledge. Thus, all forms of "ordinary", "every-day" knowledge somehow must be accounted for in the Absolute. The more the philosopher is forced to ignore different areas of knowledge, the more his thought becomes a narrow and meaningless activity which must continually assert itself over against all other types of knowledge. But then, again, why should one be bothered with the attainment of the Absolute, since indeed it is the present standpoint of Spirit? There are two answers that Hegel gives. From what he says of Spirit,<sup>12</sup> the history of Spirit is essential for bringing Spirit to its present standpoint. All the lesser forms of Spirit are incorporated in Spirit through this process. That is to say that at any particular level Spirit embodies in one form or another all the previous levels which it had attained. Also, Hegel points out what seems obvious and yet is essential for this argument; viz., that although Spirit is at the level of the Absolute any person who is a contemporary of Hegel (and also anyone who lives after him) does not actually live at this level. Any particular individual, whether he be artist, natural scientist, or "man on the street", lives at a level of consciousness which is





"below" that of the Absolute.<sup>13</sup> It thus becomes necessary for the particular individual of Hegel's time, if he is to reach the Absolute, to educate himself in his culture, as culture embodies the particular level that Spirit has reached. "In this respect, education, considered from the point of view of the individual, consists in his acquiring what is thus given to him; he must digest his inorganic nature and take possession of it for himself."<sup>14</sup> And this education will consist in nothing else but the passing "through the contents of the educational stages of the general spirit, but as forms that have long been outgrown by the spirit, as stages of a way that has been prepared and evened for him [*i.e.*, for the individual]."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Hegel acknowledges the right of the individual to demand the "ladder" to the Absolute -- "and show him this standpoint within himself."<sup>16</sup> "His right is based on his absolute independence which he possesses in every form of his knowledge; for in all of them, whether they are recognized by science or not and regardless of their contents, the individual is the absolute form, *i.e.*, he is the immediate certainty of himself ..."<sup>17</sup> This is to say that the individual has knowledge and is certain of the knowledge that he has. To take an example from the realm of sense experience which Hegel will discuss, I have knowledge of this table before me. I know that it is white, square, etc. I am certain of my knowledge of this table. But then why would the





individual person want to leave such a standpoint of certainty to seek some sort of Absolute Knowledge? What is wrong with the standpoint of the particular consciousness which the particular individual manifests? Hegel's answer to these questions is the Phen. proper.

In summary then, Hegel wants to lead the reader of his book to the standpoint of the Absolute by showing him the inadequacies of every other type of knowledge. How he actually goes about showing the individual such inadequacies leads one to the question: What is the method of explication that Hegel uses in the Phen.?



### Chapter III

As pointed out above, it is Hegel's task to present the individual who is at a level of consciousness below the Absolute with the ladder to attain Absolute Knowledge. Indeed, Hegel wants to show the individual that the standpoint of the Absolute is within him. Another way of stating this would be that Hegel wants to show science, i.e., the knowledge of the absolutely true, is related to phenomenal knowledge, i.e., the knowledge that different individuals have at different levels of consciousness and at different historical times. But Hegel points out that "if this presentation is viewed as a description of the way science is related to phenomenal knowledge, and as an investigation and critical examination into the reality of knowledge, it does not seem possible for it even to take place without some presupposition which will serve as the fundamental standard of measurement."<sup>1</sup> What Hegel is saying here is that since we are comparing two things with each other and since we want to say that one (viz., science) is better than the other (viz., any other form of knowledge), it seems then that we need some third thing to act as criterion for measuring the first against the second. But what standard can we use? Indeed, if we want our investigation to be something more than arbitrary, we must discover a standard that is not just an arbitrary standard which we must merely presuppose



at the beginning. It seems, however, that this difficulty is insurmountable because such a standard is not readily available; all we can come up with, perhaps, is some type of standard that works well in showing what Hegel wants to show, viz., the superiority of the standpoint of science. But, then, someone might come along with another standard and show that just the opposite is the case, viz., that some other level of consciousness is superior to Absolute Knowledge. Hegel admits that we would be in a quandary if it were not for the type of subject matter that we are studying. This subject matter is consciousness. What, then, is consciousness?

Hegel points out that "consciousness distinguishes from itself something to which it at the same time relates itself; or as this is expressed: this something is something for consciousness. The determinate side of this process of relating, or the being of something for a consciousness, is knowledge."<sup>2</sup> What Hegel is saying here is that in an act of consciousness of, e.g., a tree, the one who is conscious of the tree distinguishes, in that very act, himself as being conscious from the tree of which he is conscious. In the very act of distinguishing the tree from itself, consciousness relates the tree to itself, i.e., it is conscious-of-the-tree. In other words, consciousness is always consciousness-of-something. And this tree's being-of-something-for-consciousness is for consciousness





knowledge of the tree. That is, consciousness knows the tree. "From this being for an other, however, we distinguish the being-in-itself; that which is related to knowledge is at the same time distinguished from it and is posited as existing outside this relationship too. The side of this in-itself [existing outside the relationship] is truth."<sup>3</sup> To continue with our tree example: In one's very knowing the tree, one is conscious of the tree existing in its own right beyond our knowledge of it. Consciousness is consciousness-of-the-tree. Hegel calls the very existing or being of the tree in-itself the truth of the tree. Thus, "in consciousness, one moment is for an other; in other words, consciousness in general has the determination of the moment of knowledge in it. At the same time, this other is to consciousness not only something for it; it is also something outside of this relationship or in itself: the moment of truth. Therefore, in what consciousness within its own self designates as the in-itself or the true, we have the standard by which consciousness itself proposes to measure its knowledge."<sup>4</sup>

The problem, then, of what criterion to use for the examination is solved because of the peculiar nature of the subject matter. Whether we call knowledge the concept and truth the object or whether we call knowledge the object (insofar as it is the object as object, i.e., for an other) and truth the concept (insofar as it is the essence or in-





itself of the object), it will still be the task of consciousness to see whether or not the object corresponds to the concept.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this examination takes place within the same consciousness which we are observing.<sup>6</sup> Thus we do not have to add our own standards to this investigation.<sup>7</sup> In fact, since this examination is being done by the consciousness which we are observing, "it is not even necessary for us to undertake the actual examination."<sup>8</sup> On our side of the investigation it is merely a matter of observation.

From what has been presented so far, it is clear that Hegel purports to undertake a particular type of exposition, viz., the observation of the examination that will take place at every level of consciousness. And it is the burden for the individual consciousness to observe along with Hegel in order to see how different types of consciousness examine themselves. But how is one necessarily led from a particular set of observations to the standpoint of the Absolute? Or, how is "the sequence of Shapes through which consciousness passes on this road to Absolute Knowledge ... the detailed history of consciousness' own education to the level of science."<sup>9</sup> To answer this question we must take a closer look at this examining process of consciousness.

To be sure, the object seems to be for consciousness only as consciousness knows it; consciousness seems, as it



were, unable to get behind the object in order to see it, not as it is for consciousness, but as it is in itself. Therefore consciousness also seems unable to examine its own knowledge by comparing it with the object. But the difference between the in-itself and the for-itself is already present in the very fact that consciousness knows an object at all. Something is to it the in-itself, but the knowledge or the being of the object for consciousness is to it still another moment. It is upon this differentiation, which exists and is present at hand, that the examination is grounded. And if, in this comparison, the two moments do not correspond, then it will seem that consciousness will have to alter its knowledge in order to bring it into accord with the object. In the alteration of the knowledge, however, the object itself becomes to consciousness something which has in fact been altered as well. For the knowledge which existed was essentially a knowledge of the object: with change in the knowledge, the object also becomes an other, since it was an essential part of this knowledge. Hence it comes to pass for consciousness that what had been to it the in-itself is not in itself, or what was in itself was so only for consciousness.<sup>10</sup>

Hegel is pointing out here that prima facie consciousness seems unable to get at its object. How can consciousness "get behind" its knowledge of an object to the object which is really there? Won't it always be the case that it can get to the object only through its knowledge of the object? And, if this is so, how can consciousness ever examine its knowledge and the object of its knowledge? But given this fact that consciousness cannot get behind its knowledge,



it is still possible for the examination to take place. For in consciousness itself the two moments<sup>11</sup> of in-itself and for-itself are present. Indeed, this is implied in the fact that consciousness knows an object. In the very knowing of the object, consciousness differentiates the two moments of in-itself and for-itself. The object is the moment of the in-itself to consciousness. Knowledge, the being-of-the-object-for-consciousness, is to consciousness the second moment. And thus consciousness can compare the two moments to each other. Now if in fact the knowledge that consciousness has does not fit the object, then it will be forced to change its knowledge to fit the object. But since the knowledge that consciousness originally had was knowledge-of-the-object, then if the knowledge is changed so will the object be changed. "In other words, the standard of the examination," viz., the object of knowledge which acts as the criterion for knowledge, "is changed because that whose standard it was supposed to be," viz., the knowledge of the object, "fails to endure the course of the examination."<sup>12</sup> "Thus the examination is not only an examination of knowledge, but also of the standard i.e., the object of knowledge<sup>7</sup> used in the examination itself."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the object will be altered as a result of the examination. But if it is altered, then consciousness has before it a new object, and it also has a new knowledge of this object. And, again, if consciousness has these two





moments within itself, it can again examine this new knowledge with the new object of this knowledge, which examination will lead to the appearance of yet another new knowledge and another new object of knowledge. And it is this movement, "which consciousness exercises on its self -- on its knowledge as well as its object --" that Hegel calls the dialectical movement of consciousness.<sup>14</sup> This dialectical movement is called "experience" by Hegel. Thus it will be the history of this dialectical movement or the experience of consciousness which will be the proper subject matter of the Phen. But if the Phen. is the "ladder" to the standpoint of the Absolute, then what ties the "rungs" of the "ladder" together? In other words, what is the connection between the different phases of consciousness? Hegel deals with this in the following manner:

[As we have said before] Consciousness knows something, and this object is the essence or the in-itself. But this object is also the in-itself for consciousness; and hence the ambiguity of this truth comes to play. We see that consciousness now has two objects; one is the first in-itself and the second is the being-for-consciousness of this in-itself. The latter seems at first to be merely the reflection of consciousness into its self, a representation, not of an object, but only of its knowledge of the first object. But as already indicated, the first object comes to be altered for consciousness in this very process; it ceases to be the in-itself and becomes to consciousness an object which is the in-itself only for it. And therefore it follows that this, the being-for-consciousness





of this in-itself, is the true, which is to say that this true is the essence or consciousness' new object. This new object contains the annihilation of the first; it is the experience constituted through that first object.<sup>15</sup>

When that which at first appeared as the object sinks to the level of being to consciousness a knowledge of the object, and when the in-itself becomes a being-for-consciousness of the in-itself, then this is the new object. And with this new object a new Shape of consciousness also makes its appearance, a Shape to which the essence is something different from that which was the essence to the preceding Shape. It is this circumstance which guides the entire succession of the Shapes of consciousness in its necessity.<sup>16</sup>

What Hegel is getting at here is this: In the first Shape of consciousness (and this will be the Shape of ordinary, sense consciousness, as we shall see in Chapter IV) there are the two moments of knowledge (call this knowledge<sub>1</sub>) and object (call this object<sub>1</sub>). When consciousness<sub>1</sub> looks at (i.e., examines) its object<sub>1</sub> with its knowledge<sub>1</sub>, it finds that its knowledge<sub>1</sub> cannot "get behind" its object<sub>1</sub> in order to see the object<sub>1</sub> as it is in-itself. When this happens, consciousness (i.e., the first Shape of consciousness or consciousness<sub>1</sub>) discovers that the object<sub>1</sub> is only a being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-in-itself-of-the-object<sub>1</sub>. The relating of consciousness to the in-itself of the object is called by Hegel the mediation of consciousness and its object. This product of mediation, however, may seem only to be consciousness<sub>1</sub>' knowledge<sub>1</sub>, since knowledge is the



being-for-consciousness-of-the-in-itself. And it seems that at least in part this is the case, although Hegel does not explicitly say so. But beyond this, and more importantly, the being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub> of the object<sub>1</sub> is also a new object (object<sub>2</sub>) for a new consciousness (consciousness<sub>2</sub>) which has a new knowledge (knowledge<sub>2</sub>) of this object<sub>2</sub>. (Hegel calls this new object<sub>2</sub> the truth or essence of the object<sub>1</sub> because it was seen that what the object<sub>1</sub> truly was, in fact, was the being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-in-itself-of-the-object<sub>1</sub>.) And thus through this reflective process of consciousness by which it measures its knowledge against its object, we have the necessity of the progression of the Shapes of consciousness. Let us look more closely at the reflective process of consciousness in order to discover the necessity of the progression of the Shapes of consciousness.

The object<sub>1</sub> will be reflected in consciousness<sub>1</sub> and will become the being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-object<sub>1</sub>. This being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-object<sub>1</sub> will be both the knowledge<sub>1</sub> of the first Shape of consciousness and also the object<sub>2</sub> of the second Shape of consciousness. This object<sub>2</sub> (being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-object<sub>1</sub>) will be reflected in consciousness<sub>2</sub> and will become the being-for-consciousness<sub>2</sub>-of-the-object<sub>2</sub>. This latter will be both the knowledge<sub>2</sub> of consciousness<sub>2</sub> and also the new object<sub>3</sub> (which is the being-for-consciousness<sub>2</sub>-of-the-object<sub>2</sub>, the



object<sub>2</sub> being in turn the being-for-consciousness<sub>1</sub>-of-the-object<sub>1</sub>).

The actual necessity that exists between the different Gestalten is really a type of logical necessity between concepts, rather than some psychological necessity that may or may not exist between modes of consciousness. This becomes clear, I think, if one considers precisely the way in which two levels are connected. Hegel is not telling us that the new object that arises for a new consciousness is related to the previous object in that anyone who considers the two objects will somehow necessarily relate the two. If this were the case, then the necessity would not be inherent in the content under investigation. Rather, such a necessity would be dependent upon whether or not someone saw a relationship between the two objects. But for Hegel the necessity that exists in the Phen. is a necessity that resides in the organization of the phases of consciousness. The necessity in the relationship between the two objects in the two Gestalten under consideration arises from the organization of the content of the second object. The second object is a complex which contains the mediation of the first level of consciousness and its object. The first object is really present in the second object but it is present there in a modified form. It does not exist in the second object as it existed in its original state in the first Gestalt. Rather it is present in the form of a





mediated object. In other words, it was examined by the first level of consciousness and became an object-for-a-particular-consciousness. And this being-of-something-for-a-particular-consciousness is precisely the new object for a new consciousness. This process of mediation which produces a new object for a new consciousness, according to Hegel, will continue until the Absolute is reached.

It is interesting to point out that this necessity of the progression of the Shapes of consciousness is seen only by us who are viewing phenomenologically the process, although the necessary relationships exist between the Gestalten of consciousness.<sup>17</sup> All that any particular consciousness (consciousness<sub>1</sub> or consciousness<sub>2</sub>) notices is that a new object has arisen for it, which seems unconnected to the old object. Consciousness not only does not see the relationships between the objects, but it also does not see that it in fact has undergone a change and has become a new mode or Shape of consciousness. And it is this necessity of the progress of the Shapes of consciousness that Hegel calls the inner necessity by which knowledge is science.<sup>18</sup>

In order to clarify these relationships, let us look at a diagram of what Hegel has in mind:





## SYMBOLS:

C - Consciousness

K - Knowledge

O - Object

- - The elementary relationship

 $\curvearrowright$  - Reflection or the examination

= - The mediation of the object or the being-for-consciousness-of-the-object

 $\equiv$  - "Is equivalent to"

\* \* \*

First Moment  
- the first Gestalt

 $C_1 - K_1 - O_1$ 

Second Moment  
- the examination of  $O_1$  by  $C_1$

 $C_1 \curvearrowright K_1 - O_1$ 

Third Moment  
- mediation

 $(C_1 = O_1) \equiv O_2$ 

First Moment  
- second Gestalt

 $C_2 - K_2 - O_2$  or, $C_2 - K_2 - (C_1 = O_1)$ 

Etc.



## Chapter IV

Given the fundamental structure of the exposition which Hegel will undertake, let us now begin an investigation of the concrete content which Hegel does describe. Where will Hegel begin his description? "The knowledge, which is at the start or immediately our object, can be nothing else than just that which is immediate knowledge, knowledge of the immediate, of what is."<sup>1</sup> This type of knowledge is ordinary, everyday sensuous knowledge. For example, I know right now that I have a pen in my hand, that I am writing on a piece of paper, that I am in my office, that I am sitting on a chair, that there are three desks in this office, and that this office has four walls. And what is more, I am certain that I have a pen in my hand, that I am writing on a piece of paper, that there are three desks in this office, etc. Hegel points out what should seem obvious to everyone, viz., that this type of knowledge seems to contain an endless variety of content in that there are many things that can be known in this sensuous, immediate way. "The concrete content, which sensuous certainty furnishes, makes this prima facie appear to be the richest kind of knowledge, to be even a knowledge of endless wealth -- ... Besides that it seems to be the truest, the most authentic knowledge: for it has the object before itself in its entirety and completeness."<sup>2</sup> In other words,



sensuous knowledge seems to be the most authentic kind of knowledge, because the objects of this kind of knowledge are given completely in my experience. I see this green pen, the four walls, the table. I can know this pen, this table, etc. in every one of its aspects. No sensuous property of the pen or the table can escape my knowledge of it. I know each completely. And, in addition, there are an infinite number of objects that are given completely to me in sense experience.

As Hegel pointed out in the Introduction, however, this particular Gestalt or Shape of consciousness breaks up into the two essential components of the Gestalt: consciousness and object. The consciousness component of this particular Gestalt takes the form of an Ego. The object component takes the form of a particular this before me (i.e., this pen, this table). The Gestalt as a whole then, with its two essential components, takes the form of the following: "I, this particular conscious I, am certain of this fact [i.e., the pen, the table] before me ..." <sup>3</sup> What we have so far is this: I have sense knowledge of a particular before me. And at the same time I am certain of this knowledge. I know for certain that this particular pen is before me. And I also am certain that I know this particular pen. But now it becomes the task for consciousness, the particular Ego, to find the truth of its knowledge. In other words, it must carry out the examination that was discussed in the



section on method. It must measure its knowledge against the object of its knowledge. In this particular Gestalt, then, it will be a matter of consciousness discovering the particularity which its knowledge manifests. I, this particular I, have knowledge of this particular object, a pen. Where, then, is this particularity which is characteristic of sense knowledge?

To begin with, consciousness will look to the object of its knowledge to find particularity. After all, as Hegel points out, it seems that the object is what is essential to this type of knowledge. This particular pen exists whether or not I am aware of it. What do we find, then, when we look to the object of sense knowledge? We find this particular object (whether it be this pen, this table, this chair). Now the question becomes: "What is the This?"<sup>4</sup> As Hegel points out, the This immediately breaks up into two essential components, the Now and the Here. First we shall look at the Now in order to see what this Now is.

To the question "What is now?", we might answer that, e.g., "Now is night-time." This 'Now', it would seem, captures all the particularity of the present. But, as Hegel suggests, let us write down this sentence, "Now is night-time", for "a truth cannot lose anything by being written down, and just as little by our preserving and keeping it."<sup>5</sup> But if we write this sentence down and then look at it the next day, we find that this truth has "turned stale". We







discover that 'Now' does not capture the particularity of the situation. If it did, then we could not now say, "Now it is day-time." But insofar as we use 'Now' to refer to day-time, night-time, etc., we discover that the truth of the content of sense experience is the universal.<sup>6</sup> In other words, what has happened is that insofar as the Now is an essential part of the content of sense experience consciousness finds that the truth of its sensuous knowledge is the universal. But what of the other component of the This, i.e., the Here?

Let us do the same sort of thing with the Here as we did with the Now. Let us say, e.g., "Here is a tree before me." But "I turn about and this truth has disappeared and has changed around into its opposite: the Here is not a tree, but a house. The Here itself does not disappear, it is and remains in the disappearance of the house, tree, and so on, and is indifferently house, tree."<sup>7</sup> Thus the same sort of change that happened to the Now also happens to the Here. Consciousness has found again that the truth of its knowledge of the content of sense experience is the universal. In other words, this particular investigation has shown that the particularity of sense knowledge cannot be found in the object of sense knowledge, because this particular object is essentially a universal. But if the particularity is not in the object, then it must be in the Ego, which is conscious of the object. The pure object has



now become an object-for-an-Ego.

The particularity of sense knowledge does not lie in the content of the knowledge, the object which consciousness has knowledge of. Thus consciousness must now look to itself to find this particularity. "The force of its [i.e., sense knowledge's] truth thus lies in the I, in the immediate fact of my seeing, hearing, and so on, the disappearance of the particular Now and Here that we "mean" is prevented by the fact that I keep hold on them. The Now is daytime, because I see it; the Here is a tree for a similar reason."<sup>8</sup> Thus it would seem that the particularity of sense knowledge has been found in the Ego, the consciousness which has sense knowledge. But when consciousness looks closer at this Ego, it finds that the Ego can be any Ego, and therefore it discovers that the truth of sense knowledge on the side of consciousness is also universal. "By saying "this Here", "this Now", "an individual thing", I say all Thises, Heres, Nows, or Individuals. In the same way when I say "I", "this individual I", I say quite generally "all I's", every one is what I say, every one is "I", "this individual I"."<sup>9</sup>

Since neither the object alone nor consciousness alone captures the particularity of sense knowledge, consciousness discovers that neither object nor the Ego can be considered inessential to sense experience. Consciousness must now take the relationship of the object to itself in



order to see if the object-consciousness relationship manifests the particularity for which it is searching. But does this relationship capture the particularity of sense knowledge? In order to determine this, this Ego will point out the particular This to which it refers. In this way the relationship of Ego to the This will provide the particularity of sense knowledge. This pointing is done, again, in terms of the Here and Now.

First the Now is pointed out. I say to myself, "Now". But, as Hegel says in the very uttering of the word, 'Now', I have not captured the instantaneity of the Now. "The Now that is, is other than the one indicated, and we see that the Now is just this -- to be no longer the time when it is."<sup>10</sup> In other words, what Hegel is saying, although this does not come across very clearly, is that the act of pointing out the Now fails to capture the immediacy of the Now, because the very act of uttering 'Now' is a mediated process. This process seems to include three elements: the actual moment, the Now; the person who is aware of the actual moment; and the utterance "Now".

In pointing out the Here, I find the same difficulty as I did with the Now. I try to point out this particular Here, but I find that this Here is not just an immediately given Here. "The Here pointed out, which I keep hold of, is likewise a this Here which, in fact, is not this Here, but a Before, and Behind, an Above and Below, a Right and





a Left."<sup>11</sup> When a this Here is pointed out, it is not simply something which is Here. Rather, it is a this Here-in-front-of-me, -above-the-table, -next-to-the-chair. The specification of a particular this Here is really, then, a result of the process of relating this particular Here to many other Here's (i.e., myself, the table, the chair). Thus with both the Here and the Now consciousness discovers that it is not dealing with a particular Here or Now but with many Heres and Nows. Again, it finds that the truth of its sense knowledge is the universal.

This discovery by consciousness (and by us who are observing the process) that the truth of its sense knowledge is the universal presents consciousness (and us) with a new object for consciousness, the universal. Before moving on to the next Gestalt, it may be worthwhile to point out exactly what has and has not happened. What Hegel has shown is that our knowledge of particularity cannot be anything but knowledge of the particular-in-the-universal. In other words, the truth of one's sensuous knowledge of the particular is the (sensuous) universal, i.e., the particular-in-the-universal. This does not mean that Hegel now holds that empirical objects do not exist anymore. He has merely shown that our knowledge of these empirical objects is truly knowledge of the particular-in-the-universal.

In terms of the Hegelian methodology, the following has taken place: Consciousness<sub>1</sub> (the individual Ego) had





knowledge<sub>1</sub> of an object<sub>1</sub> (the immediately given This). Consciousness<sub>1</sub> attempted to measure its knowledge<sub>1</sub> against its object<sub>1</sub>. That is to say that it had knowledge of an immediately given particular, and it tried to "get hold" of the immediacy of its object. It found, however, that the truth of its knowledge<sub>1</sub> is the universal. This universal is essentially the discovery that the object<sub>1</sub> of consciousness<sub>1</sub> is an object<sub>1</sub>-for-a-consciousness<sub>1</sub>. But this latter complex relationship of object<sub>1</sub> to consciousness<sub>1</sub> is really a new object, object<sub>2</sub> (the universal). Now, as pointed out in the section on method, consciousness<sub>1</sub> actually sees a new object arise for it, but, at the same time, it takes itself to be the same as consciousness<sub>1</sub>. We, however, who are viewing the process, see that in addition to a new object there is also a new consciousness, consciousness<sub>2</sub>. This new Gestalt (i.e., consciousness<sub>2</sub> and object<sub>2</sub>) is perception.

Let us look more closely at this new Gestalt, perception. How does perceptual knowledge differ from sense knowledge? Sense knowledge manifested itself in terms of an immediately given Ego which had knowledge of an immediately given object, the This. "Perception, on the other hand, takes what exist for it to be a universal."<sup>12</sup> The perceptual Gestalt breaks up into two moments, both of which are universal: the universal subject and the universal object. First, let us consider the object. What



is the object of perceptual consciousness? "Since its [i.e., perception's] principle is in its simplicity a mediated principle, the object must express this explicitly as its own inherent nature. The object shows itself by so doing to be the thing with many properties."<sup>13</sup> The object, then, of perceptual consciousness is a thing with many properties. But this thing with many properties is not completely unrelated to the object of sense knowledge. (Indeed, one would suspect that the new object would have to be related to the previous one, if one takes seriously Hegel's contention that there is a necessary connection between the different levels of consciousness and object. However, it would seem that only we, the observers, are aware of the connection between the object of sense knowledge and the object of perceptual knowledge. For perceptual consciousness (consciousness<sub>2</sub>) sees only that a new object, seemingly unrelated to the first object, arises for it.) What, then, is the relationship?

"The This, then, is established as not This, or as superceded, and yet not nothing (simpliciter), but a determinate nothing, a nothing with a certain content, viz., the This. The sense-element is in this way itself still present, but not in the form of some particular that is "meant" -- as had to be the case in immediate certainty -- but as a universal, as that which will have the character of a property."<sup>14</sup> If one will recall, the This of the



first level of consciousness was not completely abolished. It was merely shown to be a universal. But it was a universal as a particular or determinate This. In other words, the knowledge of the universal that was achieved in the first Gestalt was really the knowledge of the particular-in-the-universal. As a determinate This, however, it becomes a property, i.e., something which is a universal (in the sense of being attachable to anything whatsoever), but at the same time it is also something which is determinate (in that a property in a particular instance is a property of some one thing). One can see from this that since the particular thing with its properties contains the determinate This, then the universal which is the object of perceptual consciousness is a conditioned universal. It is a universal that is conditioned by the sensuous, i.e., the universal property is always a property of some one thing.

The thing is the object of perceptual consciousness. The knowledge that consciousness has of the thing is that of self-sameness (Sichselbstgleichheit), i.e., the unity of the object. Since the object is there merely to be perceived (Hegel plays on the word, wahrgenommen, 'to be taken truly'), the unity of the thing would fall on the side of the object for consciousness. The thing is what it is whether or not someone perceives it. Thus consciousness will look to the object in order to find the truth of its knowledge of the object, its knowledge being that of unity





of self-sameness.

When consciousness examines its object, it does find that the object or thing of perception is a unity. But it also finds that the thing is a unity of many different properties. In other words, the thing is not just a unity, but also a plurality. There are many properties which exist in it and which are indifferent to each other. But how can the object be both a unity and a plurality at the same time? If the thing is one, then how can it also at the same time be many? Consciousness finds a contradiction or a deception (Taùschung) in its experience of the object. But if there is a deception, it must come from consciousness rather than from the object. Since the object is there to be perceived, "to be taken truly", anything that distorts perception must come from that which does the perceiving. Thus the unity of the object must be taken truly, while the plurality of the thing must be taken as coming from consciousness.<sup>15</sup>

Let us take a particular object of perception, a cube of salt. This cube of salt is a unified object; i.e., it is one thing with many properties. Such properties are, for example, whiteness, tartness, cubicity. As the cube of salt is truly a unity, then the plurality of the properties would fall on the side of consciousness. The salt is white to our eyes, also tart to our tongues, also cubical to our feeling. Thus the diversity or plurality of the properties comes from us, because our organs of perception



are completely distinct from one another. "We are consequently, the universal medium where such elements get dissociated, and exist each by itself."<sup>16</sup>

It would seem then that perceptual consciousness has resolved the conflict of the one and the many, of unity and plurality. The thing exists as a unity. It is one thing. The properties of this thing reside in the unity of this thing. It only appears that there is a plurality of properties in the thing, because consciousness, as a universal medium, distinguishes the different properties in its perception of them. But the conflict is not quite solved. In reconsidering the things of perception, consciousness realizes that "things themselves are ... determinate in and for themselves; they have properties by which they distinguish themselves from one another. Since the property is the special and peculiar property [the proper property] of the thing, or a specific characteristic in the thing itself, the thing has several properties."<sup>17</sup> What Hegel is pointing out here is that the diverse properties of the thing are really essential to the thing. In order to separate this particular thing from other things, it is necessary to list the unique combination of diverse properties that exist in the thing. Thus it would seem that plurality lies essentially in the thing of perception. But if this is so, then where does the unity lie? Since consciousness now takes the object to be essentially a plurality, then it



must relegate the apparent unity of the object to itself. For example, consciousness perceives that the thing is white, and also cubical, and also tart. But insofar as something is white, it is not cubical; insofar as it is tart, it is not white, etc. Thus consciousness takes the properties of the thing as individual properties, and then it puts them into a "one", the one thing.<sup>18</sup>

This latter attempt by consciousness to preserve the separation of the one and the many reveals to consciousness that it has failed. Consciousness has discovered that it is just as feasible to attribute unity as essential to the object as it is to attribute plurality. And at the same time it sees that it is also as feasible to relegate plurality to itself as it is to relegate unity. Thus consciousness has failed to find the essential unity of perceptual consciousness. But there is one more possibility open to consciousness. Perhaps if it takes the whole process of perception as an object, it will find the unity that consciousness has knowledge of. (It takes the process "as a whole" in the same way that sensuous consciousness took the whole process of sense knowledge. That is to say that perceptual consciousness will now consider a particular act of perception in which a universal subject perceives a universal object.) But in considering the whole process, consciousness soon discovers that this whole perceptual process is not merely a unity. For in this unified act of perception,





there exist two moments. On the one hand, the object of perception is merely something for itself, a single object of perception. But, on the other hand, it is something for an other; i.e., the object is also something for consciousness.<sup>19</sup> These two moments of for-itself and for-another are both essential to the single process of perception. Thus even though consciousness tries to find only unity in the process, it discovers that plurality is also present.

As a result, consciousness, through its examination of its knowledge against the object of its knowledge, finds that the truth of its knowledge is the unity of unity and plurality. In other words, the truth of this sphere of consciousness shows that neither unity nor plurality can exist in bare isolation from one another. This essential unity of the one and the many, however, has become a new object for a new consciousness. In terms of the methodology, consciousness<sub>2</sub> had knowledge<sub>2</sub> of an object<sub>2</sub>, and the knowledge<sub>2</sub> was the knowledge of the unity of the object. But through the examination of its object<sub>2</sub>, consciousness<sub>2</sub> found that a new object had arisen, object<sub>3</sub>. This new object<sub>3</sub>, however, is to us who are viewing the progress of the Phen. really the object<sub>2</sub>-for-consciousness<sub>2</sub>, as the object<sub>2</sub> became, as a result of the examining process, not merely an object but an object-for-consciousness. In other words, the essential unity of the one and the many is the product of the examination of the object<sub>2</sub> by consciousness<sub>2</sub>.





This new knowledge<sub>3</sub> that consciousness<sub>3</sub> has is that of the essential unity of the one and the many, of unity and plurality. Hegel points out at the end of the section on perception that this new unity of the one and many is again a universal, but this time it is not one conditioned by sense. Rather, this new universal is an unconditioned absolute universal, a universal conditioned in no way by the sensuous. The new type of consciousness, the consciousness of an unconditioned universal, will be that of the Understanding.<sup>20</sup> Hegel discusses the nature of this new Gestalt in the section on the Understanding.

Hegel's section on the Understanding deals with the third Gestalt of consciousness in the Phen. The new object for consciousness of this Gestalt is, as pointed out above, the unity of the one and the many. This one and many, as seen at the stage of perceptual consciousness, was a continual process of unification and dissolution of the thing of perception. In other words, consciousness at one point focused on the unity of the perceptual object, but in so doing was forced to consider the many properties of the object. And in focusing on the many properties, it again was forced to consider the unity of the object. This back-and-forth movement was discovered by perceptual consciousness to be a necessary movement, in that consciousness had to consider the unity of the thing when it considered its plurality, and vice-versa.<sup>21</sup> This necessary movement, the



new object for this third type of consciousness, is called Force.<sup>22</sup> Now Force, as Hegel calls it, is an unconditioned or indeterminate absolute universal. It differs from the object of perceptual consciousness, the thing, precisely because it is an unconditioned universal. What Hegel means by 'unconditioned' here is not quite clear until one considers the German word for 'unconditioned': "... indem aber beide [i.e., the unity and plurality] wesentlich in einer Einheit sind, so ist jetzt die unbedingte absolute Allgemeinheit vorhanden, und das Bewusstsein tritt hier erst wahrhaft in das Reich des Verstandes ein."<sup>23</sup> The universal (Allgemeinheit) is an unconditioned or indeterminate (unbedingte) one. The German word, 'unbedingte', suggests that Hegel may be using a play-on-words again. If this is not his intention here, certainly a play-on-words would be in order here anyway. For an essential element of the word, 'unbedingte', is the word, 'Ding'. One might say that the universal in this case is truly an "un-(be)-thinged" universal. This unconditioned universal is one that is not centered in or "tied down" to a thing as was the conditioned universal of perception. What Hegel seems to be getting at is that this new universal, Force, is not some one thing in the world of appearance. Since Force is the unity of unity and plurality, it cannot be one thing, because, as we have seen in the examination of perceptual consciousness, the truth of perceptual consciousness was not able to be grounded



on the thing of perception. In other words, the thing could not be the union of unity and plurality, because when we tried to ground such a unity in the thing of perception a conflict arose. It is Force, something beyond any particular thing, which is the unity of unity and plurality. But now let us see how the Understanding consciousness (the one that is consciousness<sub>3</sub>) investigates its object.

As soon as the object is taken to be Force, we notice that two different aspects of Force arise. On the one hand, there are particular manifestations of Force. For example, we might have an apple falling from a tree, a book being pushed across the table, a piston being propelled by the combustion of gas. In all of these examples of Force, what should be noted is that there are many different types of Force present, e.g., gravity, mechanical force, etc. But, on the other hand, in contrast to these many different manifestations of Force, one has the notion of the unity of Force, Force proper. We might think of Force proper in this case as the very general notion of Force. In other words, in all the different cases mentioned above, what is common to all of them is precisely that they all are labelled "expressions of Force". But what becomes clear now is that both aspects of Force are necessary to Force. In other words, we have to have the very general notion of Force, Force proper, in order to talk about these particular manifestations of Force. Yet there still are these individual





expressions of Force.<sup>24</sup>

There is another way of viewing this relationship between Force proper and the expressions of Force. On the one hand, when we have the above-mentioned objects in the "pre-Force" state, the concept of Force proper is applicable. These pre-Force states in the examples above would be the apple on the tree ready to fall, the book sitting on the table, and the piston before firing. The notion of Force proper is applicable to all these examples in that all have the potentiality for being acted upon by a Force. But once the Force takes place, once each particular manifestation of Force occurs, what we have is a plurality of different Forces. Force proper has lead to particular expressions of Force. But after these Forces have taken place, the general condition of Force proper returns. In other words, every object is not in the common state of being acted upon by Force. But either way we look at the opposition of Force proper and Force as expression, Hegel is arguing that both aspects of Force are necessary to the concept of Force. Both aspects are part of the very nature of Force. It is necessary to talk about Force proper if we are to talk about the manifestations of Force, and vice-versa.<sup>25</sup>

However, although both aspects of Force are necessary to the concept of Force, both oppose each other. Force, when it is expressing itself, is opposed to Force proper,



and Force proper opposes itself to Force as expression. Neither can manifest itself at the same time; it is either one or the other. But insofar as these two aspects oppose each other, consciousness must discover which of the two is really essential to its object, Force. Since there is this opposition, one must be essential while the other would at the same time be inessential to Force. (This dilemma is comparable to the conflict that occurred at the level of perception between the unity of the thing and the plurality of its properties.) But consciousness, in actually examining the concept of Force, discovers that both of the aspects are essential to it.<sup>26</sup> It is impossible to understand something in terms of Force proper without at the same time understanding that Force proper is the opposite of Force as expression. This argument for the relationship between the two concepts is essentially the argument of the previous paragraph.

Since both of the opposing aspects of Force are essential to Force, consciousness must look elsewhere to resolve the opposition. So far, consciousness has looked only to the object that it has. But it is provided with an opportunity to resolve the opposition when it realizes that the object of consciousness is not a barren object purely in-itself. The object, Force, while it is an object-in-itself, is at the same time an object-for-consciousness, and the consciousness of this particular Gestalt is called by Hegel



"Understanding".<sup>27</sup> (The Understanding seems here to be the name of the activity which we would call intelligent activity. The Understanding goes beyond the mere sensing and perceiving activities of earlier forms of consciousness. The Understanding tries to explain the events in the world. Its object is not merely phenomenal reality. This will become clearer as we proceed in our investigation.)

It is the task of the Understanding, then, to resolve the opposition of the two Forces, Force proper and Force as manifestation. It does this by creating an inner world of real being which is a world beyond the world of appearance. In this inner world, which is a supersensible world because it is beyond the sensible, the universality of Force, Force proper, resides. And in the world of appearance, the phenomenal world, the many expressions and interactions of Force take place.<sup>28</sup> Thus what we have is something like the following: on the side of consciousness we have the Understanding; on the side of the object we have the supersensible world; in between the two we have the world of appearance. In the supersensible world lies the unity of Force, Force proper. This world accounts for the universality of Force in that in this world Force exists as an undifferentiated possibility. That is to say that given any particular event in the phenomenal world, it is possible to explain it in terms of the concept of Force. On the other hand, in the sensible world, a world of mere





appearances, we have the particular manifestations of Force. These manifestations are what Hegel calls the interplay of Forces (Spiel der Kräfte).<sup>29</sup> It seems, then, that with this sort of account of the two aspects of Force the apparent contradiction between the aspects has now been resolved.

A number of problems arise from this solution, however. Since there are two worlds, the world of appearance and the world of supersensible being, how do the two relate? Also, since the world of appearance acts as the middle between the Understanding and the supersensible world, how does the Understanding get to the supersensible world? What is it in the sphere of the play of Forces that would lead one to the supersensible? In order to answer these questions, the Understanding must take a closer look at the play of Forces, since it is through that realm of appearance that the Understanding can know the supersensible. What then is this play of Forces?

The Understanding finds in the world of appearance the distinction between the inciting force and the incited force. What Hegel seems to be getting at here is something like the basic distinction between the agent and the patient in any interaction between two physical entities. For example, if someone were to kick a chair, the following "play of Forces" would take place. The person's foot moves through the air toward the chair. The moving foot would be a manifestation of the inciting force. The chair is sitting in the middle





of the floor; before it is hit, it is not moving at all. This fixed chair would be a manifestation of an incited force. When the foot meets the chair, there is an interplay of forces with the result that a new state of affairs is created. (That is, that either the chair goes flying across the room or the person breaks his foot.) "What is found in this flux of thoroughgoing change is merely difference as universal difference, or difference into which the various opposites have been resolved. This difference as universal, consequently, is what constitutes the ultimate simple element in that play of forces, and is the resultant truth of that process. It is the Law of Force."<sup>30</sup>

Hegel is pointing out here that, although there are many different manifestations of inciting force and incited force, "in this flux of thoroughgoing change" in the world of appearance, there is still something common or "universal" to all these different manifestations. The Understanding finds that what is common to all the particular manifestations of Force is the Law of Force. "Law", in this case, implies universality. That is, that a Law holds for all cases. Thus no matter what Force takes place in the realm of appearance, it is true that some Force does take place. In other words, no matter what type of Forces appear, they all are incorporated under the general notion of a "Law of Force". This general notion of Law, then, is the passage to the supersensible world of the universality of



Force, because the Law of Force is a universal principle (in that it holds for all cases) and the supersensible world is the world in which the universal resides.

At this point one might be confused at what Hegel is doing. It might be difficult to see how the notion of Law differs from the notion of Force proper. After all, are they not both universals? It would seem that the principal difference between the two is that whereas Force proper still was incorporated in the phenomenal world (hence the opposition between Force proper and Force as manifestation) the Law of Force is essentially a member of the supersensible world. The Understanding played no part in the actual conflict between Force as expression and Force proper, whereas now it delegates the Law of Force to the supersensible world (which it had originally created). Let us return to this Law of Force.

"The absolute flux of the world of appearance passes into bare and simple difference through its relation to the simplicity of the inner being, the simplicity apprehended by understanding."<sup>31</sup> The Understanding has seemingly resolved the conflict between the multiple manifestations of Force and the unified concept of Force. The supersensible world with its Law of Force accounts for the unity of Force, while the world of appearance accounts for the multiple expressions of Force.

This implicit simple universal, however, is essentially absolute universal



difference as well; for it is the outcome of the change itself, or change is its very nature. But change, when planted in the inner reality as it [change] truly is, forthwith is taken up into that reality as equally absolute universal difference at peace with itself, and remaining at one with itself. In other words, negation is an essential moment of the universal; and negation or mediation in what is universal is universal difference. This difference is expressed in the law, which is the stable presentiment or picture of unstable appearance. The supersensible world is in this way a quiescent "kingdom of laws," no doubt beyond the world of perception ... but likewise present in it, and its direct immovable copy or image.<sup>32</sup>

The Law of Force in the supersensible world is not just a Law of Force. Since the supersensible world was created to account for the universality of the many different manifestations in the phenomenal world, to really account for these manifestations the supersensible world must "do justice to" the different manifestations of Force. In other words, it must not contain a single Law of Force, but rather it must be a kingdom of laws.

Thus as a result of the discovery of the kingdom of laws, consciousness has now resolved the difficulty that originally presented itself to consciousness. Consciousness had to find where the opposing aspects of the unity and plurality of Force lie. It has done so now by grounding the unity of Force in the kingdom of laws and the plurality of Force in the world of appearance. But in what way precisely does the kingdom of laws account for or "do





justice to" the world of appearance? On the one hand, if a particular law is really to account for a particular event in the world of appearance, then it would have to become a very specific, determinate law. But, insofar as each law is a very specific law, there now arises a plurality of many different laws. "But this plurality is rather itself a defect; it contradicts the principle of Understanding, for which it is consciousness of simple inner being, truth is the inherently universal unity."<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this plurality should not come about. All the laws in the kingdom should coalesce in a single universal law, in order to preserve the unity of the kingdom of laws. Insofar as all the laws coalesce in one single universal law, they lose their specific characteristics. But then, by losing their specific characteristics, they also lose that which makes them laws of particular events in the world of appearance. Consciousness thus finds itself confronted by a new opposition of unity and plurality, the unity and plurality of the kingdom of laws.<sup>34</sup>

Thus consciousness has found that the aspects of unity and diversity have found their way into the supersensible world. Hegel gives a particular example of a force and the law of it to show how unity and diversity have appeared in the kingdom of laws. Let us take his example, that of electricity.<sup>35</sup> The notion of electricity covers all the particular manifestations of electricity in the world of



appearance. In other words, the diverse manifestations would be accounted for by the law of electricity. The law of electricity accounts for the difference in diverse manifestations of electricity by positing positive and negative electricity. In one sense electricity, as a unified Force, is not essentially this two-fold negativity-positivity. But this two-fold property is necessary to electricity. In other words, if the law of electricity is to account for all the manifestations of electricity, it can do so only by dealing with the manifestations in terms of positivity and negativity.<sup>36</sup> The Understanding discovers, as it realizes that the supersensible world has these two aspects to it, that diversity, multiplicity, and interaction, which were originally characteristics of the world of appearance, now exist in the supersensible world. It realizes this in the process of explaining particular events in the world of appearance.<sup>37</sup>

As there was an untenable opposition created in the world of appearance, so also is there one created in the supersensible world. In the world of appearance, one had to account for both plurality and unity of Force. There were the opposing aspects of universality and particularity. So also is it the case with the supersensible world. The laws of this kingdom display the opposing aspects of universality and particularity. That is that the laws must be both general enough to come together in a unity of laws



and specific enough to account for the particular manifestations of Force.

But in the same way that this opposition of the one and the many had to be solved at the level of appearance, so now must it be resolved in the supersensible world. The Understanding brings this about by means of a second supersensible world. This second supersensible world is the direct opposite of the first supersensible world and is thus an inverted world.<sup>38</sup> Whereas the first world embodied the principles of unity and permanence, the second embodies the principles of plurality and change. Whereas in the first world each law, because it was a general law, was identical with the other laws, in the second world each law, because it is a specific law, is unlike every other law.<sup>39</sup>

The Understanding has the two supersensible worlds to explain whatever appears in the world of appearance. These two worlds can completely explain whatever occurs in the world of appearance, because each element in the first world has its direct counterpart in the second world. For example, given any particular phenomenal event, the Understanding will be able to account for it by means of a law in either the first supersensible world or in the second supersensible world. Hegel gives two examples of laws, one, the sweet and sour, the other, the negatively electrical and the positively electrical. It is not quite clear what





is meant by the "law" of sweet and sour. Perhaps Hegel means that any phenomenal event must be accounted for by a "law" in one of the two supersensible worlds. Since sweetness or sourness occurs in the phenomenal world, it must have a counterpart in one of the two supersensible worlds. In any case, here I will concentrate on the latter example of electricity.

Let us say, for example, that one observes a particular phenomenal event such as the magnetizing of a piece of iron. Now let us say that one wishes to explain this event. To explain something, at least at this particular level of consciousness, one must relate this phenomenal event to a law in one of the supersensible worlds. The first supersensible world, e.g., contains the law of positive electricity or positive electrical force; i.e., one might explain the event in terms of positive electrical elements. Now if the event cannot be accounted for in terms of positive electricity, one must then use the law of negative electricity, or negative electrical force contained in the second supersensible world. That is, one must account for the event in terms of negative electrical elements. The Understanding, because it wants to explain the phenomenal world, must have recourse to one of the two laws in one of the two supersensible worlds.<sup>40</sup>

The supersensible worlds thus present themselves as worlds in which an infinite number of laws are possible.





Whatever occurs in the world of appearance is amenable to some sort of explanation in terms of one of the supersensible worlds. But now that there is an infinite variety of possible explanations for something, the Understanding discovers that it alone is the source of explanation. In other words, the Understanding has discovered that only it can decide what is to be explained and in what manner the explanation is to proceed. It is the Understanding alone that makes the distinctions in the realm of appearance, and it alone then accounts for the distinctions that it makes by explaining these distinctions (e.g., positive and negative electricity) in terms of supersensible realities. Consciousness, as Understanding, thus has discovered that the truth of this particular Gestalt of consciousness is consciousness itself. In other words, consciousness now finds itself confronted by a new object, consciousness-of-self.<sup>41</sup>

To sum up what has taken place in this section on Understanding in terms of the methodology: Consciousness<sub>3</sub> has knowledge<sub>3</sub> of an object<sub>3</sub>. This knowledge<sub>3</sub> is that of an unconditioned universal. Consciousness<sub>3</sub>, as it measures its knowledge<sub>3</sub> against its object<sub>3</sub>, finds that the object<sub>3</sub> is essentially both unity and plurality (or, universality and particularity). Consciousness<sub>3</sub> tries to account for this unity of opposites in the object<sub>3</sub>. It fails to do this even by using the two supersensible worlds to account for the opposition in the world of appearance. It finds, while



it is in the process of accounting for the opposition, that the truth of this Gestalt of consciousness (i.e., the unconditioned universal) is an infinitely unconditioned universal which is consciousness itself. In other words, the object<sub>3</sub> of consciousness<sub>3</sub> has become an object<sub>3</sub>-for-a-consciousness<sub>3</sub> which is a new object for a new consciousness. This fourth Gestalt would be consciousness conscious of itself, or, in other words, self-consciousness.

\*            \*            \*

Now that all three sections in the Phen. have been analyzed, I would like to review the progress from the beginning of the first Gestalt to the beginning of the third Gestalt in order to point out exactly what Hegel has done and how what he has done is what he said he would do. In doing so, I also want to underscore the necessary connections between the levels.

In the first Gestalt, Sense-Certainty, consciousness<sub>1</sub> appeared as an individual Ego and the object<sub>1</sub> appeared as a particular This. The knowledge<sub>1</sub> of consciousness<sub>1</sub> was the knowledge of the particularity of the object<sub>1</sub>. Consciousness<sub>1</sub> then measured its knowledge<sub>1</sub> against its object<sub>1</sub> in order to discover the truth of its knowledge<sub>1</sub>. In so doing, consciousness<sub>1</sub> discovered that the truth of its knowledge<sub>1</sub> is the sensuous universal, i.e., the particular-in-the-universal. The truth of the This was that it is



inherently universal. This universal, however, was really a new object for a new consciousness. The sensuous universal appeared as a thing with many properties. This thing was the object<sub>2</sub> of the second Gestalt. And the consciousness<sub>2</sub> at this level appeared as perceptual consciousness. What is important here is that the object<sub>2</sub> contains the object<sub>1</sub>. The object<sub>2</sub> was a thing with many properties. But this thing is really a crystalization of the Thises and Heres of the first Gestalt. In other words, the thing was a unification of this particular size, this particular weight, and this particular shape. And it is this relationship between the This (object<sub>1</sub>) and the thing (object<sub>2</sub>) that is the necessary connection that exists between the first Gestalt and the second one.

In the second Gestalt consciousness<sub>2</sub> (perceptual consciousness) measured its knowledge<sub>2</sub> (the knowledge of the unity and plurality of the object) against the object<sub>2</sub> (the thing with many properties). As a result of the examination, consciousness<sub>2</sub> discovered that the truth of its knowledge<sub>2</sub> was the essential unity of unity and plurality. This unity and plurality was described by Hegel as a back-and-forth movement, i.e., Force. It is this unity of unity and plurality which is the object<sub>3</sub> for consciousness<sub>3</sub>. In regard to this new object<sub>3</sub> the object<sub>2</sub> is present in the object<sub>3</sub> (and thus the object<sub>1</sub> is present in the object<sub>3</sub>) in the following way. The object<sub>3</sub> is Force, the back-and-





forth movement of unity and plurality. But what is this movement of unity and plurality? At the level of perception, consciousness<sub>2</sub> found that in considering the unity of its object<sub>2</sub> it had to introduce plurality, and vice versa. More precisely, perceptual consciousness found that it had to consider the unity of the thing of perception when it considered the plurality of the properties of the thing and vice versa. Perceptual consciousness, through the examination of its object<sub>2</sub>, discovered the necessary back-and-forth consideration of the unity and plurality of the object<sub>2</sub>. And it is this essential back-and-forth movement between the unity of the object and the plurality of it that is present in object<sub>3</sub>. Thus in this fashion has Hegel presented the essential connection between the object<sub>2</sub> and the object<sub>3</sub>.



## Chapter V

In this chapter of the thesis, I would like to discuss a particular commentator on Hegel, Alexandre Kojève. The reason for discussing Kojève here is that he offers a very interesting commentary on Hegel's "phenomenological method" and its relation to the nature of the dialectic and the nature of Thought. First, I will present a general picture of his interpretation. This presentation will be an answer to such questions as, "What is Hegel's method?", "What is the nature of the Real?", "What is the dialectic?", "What is the task of philosophy?", and "What is the Absolute and when is its attainment possible?" After these questions have been answered by an exposition of Kojève's thought on Hegel, I will next raise some questions in regard to his interpretation of Hegel as compared to my interpretation. Finally, the comparison of our views on Hegel will raise some further problems with which Hegel himself would have to contend.

The essence of Kojève's position on Hegel is given in a series of lectures entitled, "The Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method of Hegel".<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the title, Kojève discusses two principal items, the dialectic of the Real and also the phenomenological method of Hegel. To begin then, what does Kojève say about the method of Hegel as manifested in the Phen. According to



him, "the Hegelian method ... is purely contemplative and descriptive, or better, phenomenological in Husserl's sense of the term. In the Preface and the Introduction to the Phenomenology, Hegel insists on the passive, contemplative, and descriptive character of the "scientific" method."<sup>2</sup>

For Kojève, Hegel's method, whether in the Phen. or in the other Hegelian works, is a purely passive act of observation. He emphasizes this passivity in two later passages in which he discusses the Hegelian method as used by the Wise Man (he who is at the level of the Absolute using the phenomenological method). According to Kojève, the Wise Man using this method "looks at everything that is and verbally describes everything that he sees: therefore, he has nothing to do, for he modifies nothing, adds nothing, and takes nothing away."<sup>3</sup> "His role is that of a perfectly flat and indefinitely extended mirror: he does not reflect on the Real; it is the Real that reflects itself on him, is reflected in his consciousness, and is revealed in its own dialectical structure by the discourse of the Wise Man who describes it without deforming it."<sup>4</sup>

Kojève, while pointing out what the method of Hegel is, also says what it is not. For Kojève, "Hegel's method, then, is not at all dialectical, [<sup>7</sup>'dialectical' meaning "the method of dialogue or discussion" used by all previous philosophers], and Dialectic for him is quite different from a method of thought or exposition."<sup>5</sup> In other words,





Kojève claims that Hegel is the first philosopher who is consciously using a non-dialectical (non-dialogical) method.<sup>6</sup> But more important than this, it is necessary to point out that the phenomenological method of Hegel presupposes something about the nature of Absolute Knowledge. That is, because of the peculiar nature of Absolute Knowledge, the Wise Man can go about his task of pure description. What then is the nature of Absolute Knowledge? As Kojève points out, "What is of importance is that -- in the Truth -- there is perfect coincidence of the Begriff and the Gegenstand, and that -- in the Truth -- Knowledge is purely passive adequation to essential-Reality. And that is why the true Scientist or the Wise Man must reduce his existence to simple contemplation (reines Zusehen) of the Real and of Being."<sup>7</sup> In Absolute Knowing, the Absolute Knower merely contemplates or reflects the Real, i.e., Real Being. All other "knowers", i.e., the naive man, the vulgar scientist, or even the pre-Hegelian philosopher, do not passively reflect the Real; "... each in his own way opposes himself to the Real and deforms /déforment/ it by opposing his own means of action and methods of thought to it."<sup>8</sup> However, this is not so for the Absolute Knower who contemplates and reflects.

But the question now arises: What is it that thought reflects; i.e., what is the object of our purely passive observation? The answer, of course, is "Being". But just this is not enough. The proper object of thought is the





dialectic of Being that is. The task of the Wise Man who has achieved Absolute Knowledge is to reflect the real Dialectic of Being.<sup>9</sup> But this means for Kojève that in some sense the nature of the Hegelian Science is dialectical. "And if Hegelian Science is dialectical or synthetical, it is only because it describes that real dialectic in its totality, as well as the series of consecutive philosophies which corresponds to that dialectical reality."<sup>10</sup> But it must be emphasized that True Thought is dialectical only in this derivative sense of reflecting the real dialectic of Being. "Thought is dialectical only to the extent that it correctly reveals the dialectic of Being that is and of the Real that exists."<sup>11</sup> True Thought reflects the active negating and overcoming of contradictions in Being, and is thus dialectical in a derivative sense.

But since True Thought reflects the Real and since the Real is dialectical, it is important to describe the Real in more exacting terms. Kojève makes explicit what the Real is according to Hegel.

History is what judges men, their actions and their opinions, and lastly their philosophical opinions as well. To be sure, History is, if you please, a long "discussion" between men. But this real historical "discussion" is something quite different from a philosophic dialogue or discussion. The "discussion" is carried out not with verbal arguments, but with clubs and swords or cannon on the one hand, and with sickles and hammers or machines on the other. If one wants to speak of a "dialectical method" used by History, one must make clear that one is talking about methods



of war and of work. This real, or better, active, historical dialectic is what is reflected in the history of philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

Two important points are contained in this passage. First, according to Kojève, real Being, for Hegel, is History, and the dialectic of real Being is the dialectic of History. Second, the actual dialectic of Being is brought about by the methods of war and work that have appeared in History. Now in regard to the first point, prima facie, one might think that Kojève is not talking about the Real when he is talking about History. In other words, it might seem that Kojève is talking about Hegel's Philosophy of History here. But that this is not the case can be shown from what Kojève says in this passage. Kojève points out that the real historical dialectic is what is reflected in the history of philosophy. But on the previous page (p. 184), Kojève had just pointed out that "each [pre-Hegelian] philosophy correctly reveals or describes a turning point or a stopping place ... of the real dialectic, of the Bewegung of existing Being." Thus it seems that it would be safe to conclude that the real dialectic is the historical dialectic and that the Real is History. Furthermore, since Kojève's emphasis up to the passage above has been on the nature of the Hegelian Science, the nature of Thought, and the nature of Being and since all references in the article are from the Phen., from the Logic, or from the Encyclopedia, it would



certainly be odd to assume that now Kojève is talking about History in relation to Hegel's Philosophy of History.

In regard to the second point made about the above passage on History, it is necessary to point out that what the "moving force" is in the dialectic of the Real is the negativity that is implied in methods of war and of work. "Now, by the way, reality is dialectical only because it implies a negative or negating element: namely the active negation of the given, the negation which is at the foundation of every bloody fight and of all so-called "physical" work."<sup>13</sup> Thus according to Kojève, it is work or war, i.e., human activity, which is the moving force of the dialectic of the Real. And this human activity cannot be seen as "Thought" that is "acting on" Being to bring about a dialectical movement. Kojève explicitly rules out "Thought" having any role to play in the dialectic of the Real. "Hence one might be inclined to say that Being is dialectical only to the extent that it is revealed by Thought, that Thought is what gives Being its dialectical character. But this formulation would be incorrect, or at least misleading."<sup>14</sup>

Now the final point that has to be made about Kojève's interpretation is involved with the question, "How is it possible for the complete contemplation of the Real to take place?" That is, how is it that Hegel can be the first to do away with dialectic as a method and undertake the passive observation of the Real? Kojève points out that this





possibility presupposes

... the completion of the real Dialectic of Fighting and of Work, that is, the definitive stopping of History. It is only "at the end of time" that a Wise Man (who happened to be named Hegel) can give up all dialectical method -- that is, all real or ideal negation, transformation, or "critique" of the given -- and limit himself to describing the given -- that is, to revealing through discourse the given precisely as it is given.<sup>15</sup>

A pure passive contemplation of the Real is possible only at the end of History, i.e., the end of the dialectic of History. Once this whole process is over the Wise Man can then completely contemplate and reflect the Real which is given. And "History stops when Man no longer acts in the full sense of the term -- that is, when he no longer negates, no longer transforms the natural and social given through bloody Fighting and creative Work."<sup>16</sup>

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Kojève's interpretation of Hegel in some places resembles the interpretation presented earlier in this thesis. It may be worthwhile to point out where the similarities are before the differences are discussed. First, Kojève points out correctly what the Truth is, i.e., what the Absolute is. He says that it is the perfect coincidence of Concept and Object. This uncontroversial point is obvious to those who read the Introduction to the Phen. Second, Kojève points out that Hegel's method (or as it has been



described in this thesis, Hegel's manner of exposition) is a phenomenological one of observation. Again this seems to agree with the discussion of Hegel's method of exposition presented in this thesis. But a difficulty arises when the emphasis Kojève makes on the passivity of observation is noted. Why is Kojève so emphatic about this passivity? Well, one point he certainly does want to make is that true knowledge, i.e., Absolute Knowing, is not dialectical, or is so in only a derivative sense. Kojève wants to emphasize that True Thought does not in any way distort Reality, it merely reflects it. It is only the Real which is truly dialectical (i.e., containing negativity), and True Thought adequately reflects this Real. But the question arises, "Is it only the Real for Hegel which is dialectical?" And anyway, what precisely is the Real for Hegel? Is it what Kojève says it is?

Hegel discusses dialectical movement in the Introduction of the Phen. And, as was pointed out in Chapter III above, for Hegel the dialectical movement is the result of the examination that consciousness exercises on its knowledge and the object of its knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Thus it is consciousness which is primarily dialectical for Hegel. Or, more precisely, it is the examination or investigation that a particular consciousness carries out on its object which produces the dialectical movement that Hegel discusses. Consciousness or Thought constitutes an essential element



of the dialectical process. And this is one of the points that Hegel wants to make in the Phen. That is, Hegel wants to show us, in the Phen., that the interaction of consciousness and object (or Thought and Being) brings about the dialectical movement which constitutes the Real. In terms of Absolute Knowledge, as was pointed out at the beginning of Chapter II above, Hegel wanted to show us that the object of thought is just as much thought as it is object and that thought is just as much object of thought as it is thought. This is the coincidence of Concept and Object that Kojève mentions.

However, one may object to this refutation of Kojève on two counts. First, one might want to say that Kojève really admits that consciousness is active in the dialectic of the Real, because it is the activity of war and work, which are really modes of human consciousness, that provides the movement in the dialectic of the Real. Second, one might want to say that Kojève is talking about the nature of Absolute Knowing, or the Absolute Consciousness, rather than any pre-Absolute way of knowing or level of consciousness. Now, in answer to the first objection, if Kojève does think that war and work are somehow modes of consciousness, it is certainly clear that not all modes of consciousness have the same negating power as does the activity of war and work. For Kojève clearly holds that certain modes of consciousness, viz., the science of the vulgar scientist, the common sense





of the naive man, and the philosophy of the pre-Hegelian philosopher, do nothing but deform already existing reality. These modes of consciousness can only detract from reality; they can never add to it. Yet for Hegel, all modes of consciousness add an essential ingredient to the dialectic of the Real. This is clear from the Phen. as a whole, wherein Hegel shows us that the examination that every particular consciousness undertakes adds to the dialectical movement of consciousness.

The second objection, however, is not as easily handled as was the first one. Now, it is certainly the case that Absolute Knowledge is different from non-Absolute Knowledge. But the important question is: In what way does Absolute Knowledge differ from other forms of knowledge? According to Kojève, the answer is that Absolute Knowledge is only the reflection and contemplation of the Real while other forms of knowledge distort and deform the Real. But is this the difference between the two? Well, from Hegel's discussion of the dialectical movement of consciousness, at least one thing is clear. At every level of consciousness below the Absolute, consciousness always approaches its object as something completely given to it, something totally independent of it. And after consciousness examines its object, it finds that its object is really an object-for-consciousness. This discovery then leads consciousness to a new object for it. But at the level of the Absolute, consciousness





discovers that its object is always an object-for-consciousness. And if this is so, then consciousness will not undertake any further examination of its object, for consciousness now knows that its object is not something completely given to it which can be used as the criterion for the examination of knowledge. But then, if no examination takes place, then it would seem that no dialectical movement can be engendered, for the dialectical process came about as a result of the examining procedure of consciousness. Thus it would seem that at the level of the Absolute all dialectic would cease. But then, would not Absolute Knowledge then be just the reflection of this dialectic of the Real, as Kojève says? It certainly appears that Kojève is in some way justified in his claim about Absolute Knowledge. Yet, two objections against Kojève's position must be made here.

Even if we assumed that Kojève is right in what he says about Absolute Knowledge, what he says about that which is reflected in Absolute Knowledge (viz., the Real) is certainly off the mark. For as we have shown, the dialectic for Hegel is the dialectic of consciousness as it investigates its object rather than the real dialectic of history. (History, for Hegel, would have a dialectic in the derivative sense, only because Reason has been active in History.) The Real, if it is merely reflected in Absolute Knowledge, does contain the activity of consciousness as an essential ingredient. And this certainly Kojève has missed. But more



important than this, it is necessary to point out that Absolute Knowledge and pre-Absolute Knowledge are not as completely distinct as Kojève seems to think. At every level of consciousness, including the level of the Absolute, the object of consciousness is always an object-for-consciousness. But it is only at the level of the Absolute that consciousness truly realizes this. But if the object of consciousness is always an object-for-consciousness, it is difficult to see how Absolute Knowing can be just a purely passive reflection of the Real. If there is some question as to the correctness of Kojève's interpretation, what then can be said about Absolute Knowledge? First, one can say that at the level of the Absolute consciousness knows that its object is for it. Second, any "knowing" that occurs at the level of the Absolute will not be the pure reflection of an independently given reality as Kojève claims. Third, all "absolute" knowing will be done in terms of the realization that the object of thought is always an object-for-thought.

Since there have been difficulties with Kojève's account of Absolute Knowledge, there are a number of other relevant questions that can be asked here. First, is Hegel's method as purely passive as Kojève says it is? Second, does Absolute Knowledge need as a necessary condition the end of History? Third, in what way does dialectic end at the level of the Absolute? In answer to the first question, it would appear that no one would admit that Hegel's method is as



passive as Kojève thinks. And if Absolute Knowledge is not mere reflection of the Real and since the phenomenological method is grounded in the nature of this Absolute Knowledge, then it would seem that Hegel's method cannot be simply passive observation. Furthermore, if Absolute Knowledge is not mere reflection of the Real which is the dialectic of History, then it would appear that there does not have to be a definitive end to History for there to be Absolute Knowledge. Indeed, Hegel never mentions such an end to History. The philosopher can neither predict future History nor the end of History. The philosopher can only try to make intelligible that which has occurred in History.

The third question posed is more difficult to determine than the others. According to Kojève, the possibility for there being Absolute Knowledge presupposes the end of the dialectic of the Real. Now if we interpret 'Real' our way (i.e., including the activity of consciousness) rather than Kojève's way, is it possible to say that this is the case? In other words, does Absolute Knowledge presuppose the end of the dialectic of consciousness. Now, it has already been pointed out that a dialectic of consciousness arises only because a particular consciousness undertakes the examination of its object which it takes to be given independent of consciousness. But at the level of the Absolute, consciousness discovered that its object is always an object for it. Thus it would appear that no further examination





would take place. And if this is so, then the dialectic of the Real has come to an end at the Absolute. Although this conclusion is rather appealing, I think that no definitive answer can be given at this point. It is difficult to accept that no dialectic is present in any of Hegel's other works which supposedly are constituted at the level of the Absolute (e.g., the Logic). One thing is clear, however, whatever dialectic is present in Hegel's other works, it cannot be of the same nature as the dialectic in the Phen. In other words, the dialectic that appears in the Phen. is the result of the examination that consciousness undertakes. But at the Absolute consciousness no longer undertakes such an investigation, for it knows that its object is for it. Thus no such dialectic can be produced at the level of the Absolute.



## Summary

Our task in this thesis was to discuss the methodology of Hegel's Phaenomenologie des Geistes. In order to do this, two things had to be done first. One needed a discussion of the reasons for Hegel's writing the Phen. The principal reason, as we said, was to lead the individual to the level of the Absolute. But in order to understand these reasons, we needed a discussion of the two principal concepts that would aid us in understanding the reasons for the Phen.: "Spirit" and "Absolute". Next, we saw that Hegel's reasons for writing the Phen. led Hegel to employ a particular manner of exposition. Hegel presented the content of the Phen. in order to lead us to the level of the Absolute by means of a phenomenological observation of the way a particular mode of consciousness examined the object of its knowledge. With this method, we watched how Hegel analyzed particular levels or Gestalten of consciousness, viz., sense-certainty, perception, and understanding. After this presentation the interpretation of a noted commentator on Hegel, viz., Alexandre Kojève, was presented. The similarities and differences between his interpretation and the one presented in this thesis were discussed. Some problems that arose with his interpretation were then considered.



## Footnotes\*

### Chapter II

1. Baillie, Hegel's Phen., p. 797; Hegel, Phaen., p. 556.
2. Kaufmann (2), Hegel: Texts and Commentary, p. 36; Baillie, op. cit., p. 85; Hegel, op. cit., p. 24.
3. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 12; Baillie, op. cit., p. 70; Hegel, op. cit., p. 12.
4. Miller, Hegel's Logic, p. 49.
5. Note that 'being' will be used interchangeably with 'object (of consciousness)' and 'thought' with 'consciousness'.
6. Wallace, The Logic of Hegel, p. 10f.
7. For different interpretations of 'Spirit' see Grégoire, Etudes Hégéliennes, pp. 152 - 205.
8. See Kaufmann (2), op. cit., pp. 6, 8, 10; Baillie, op. cit., pp. 67 - 70; Hegel, op. cit., pp. 8 - 12.
9. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 12; Baillie, op. cit., p. 70f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 12. Note here Kaufmann's very misleading headings (p. 14): "I.2 Inner necessity that philosophy become scientific". He leads one to believe that Hegel actually discusses the inner necessity of knowledge (Kaufmann (2), op. cit., pp. 14, 16, 18). But Hegel on these pages is discussing the position of Spirit and, therefore, is referring to external necessity.
10. Hegel points out that these two necessities differ from one another only in regards to the time element. He does not elaborate on this, but I think that he means the following: Spirit needs history in order to manifest its concrete forms. That is to say that each of

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\*All works referred to in the footnotes are listed in the Bibliography. Where multiple references are given, the first one refers to the actual text quoted.





Spirit's phases has been embodied in a particular historical period. (Note: there is some question regarding the actual succession of the phases portrayed in the Phen. On this point, see Hyppolite, Genèse et Structure, p. 39f.) Thus there is a temporal factor in the external necessity discussed. With regard to the inner necessity, however, there is no such temporal factor. In other words, Hegel has assembled the concrete phases of Spirit so that they can be viewed "all at once". Thus the individual person in Hegel's time can reach the standpoint of the Absolute not by living in all the concrete manifestations of Spirit but rather by working through the concrete levels in the Phen. and by seeing the necessity (i.e., the inner necessity) of the different phases. This will be discussed later in the section on the method of the Phen.

11. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 26 (see also p. 24); Baillie, op. cit., pp. 77 - 79; Hegel, op. cit., p. 18f. Note too the section on "schematizing formalism", Kaufmann (2), op. cit., pp. 74, 76, 78; Baillie, op. cit., pp. 107 - 110; Hegel, op. cit., pp. 41 - 43.
12. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., pp. 14, 16, 18, 44; Baillie, op. cit., pp. 74 - 79, pp. 89 - 91; Hegel, op. cit., pp. 12 - 15, p. 26f.
13. 'Below' would mean that the particular level of consciousness does not manifest something which is essential to the Absolute. What this is in particular is, as we have pointed out previously, the realization of the unity of being and thought.
14. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., pp. 44, 46; Baillie, op. cit., p. 89f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 26f. The "inorganic nature" that Hegel introduces is the level that Spirit has reached in any particular culture. Any particular individual who is a contemporary of Hegel, e.g., would have this nature because he was "born into" the particular culture. And this nature would be inorganic in the sense that the individual has not yet become aware of the content of the culture.
15. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 44; Baillie, op. cit., p. 89f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 26. A small point in passing: it seems that Kaufmann (Kaufmann (1), Hegel: A Reinterpretation, p. 43f) attempts to make a false dichotomy out of the purpose of the Phen.  
 In his Phenomenology Hegel accepted,  
 along with much else that we have cited  
 from Lessing, the idea of \*93, i.e.,





the dictum of Lessing that "Precisely the way in which the species reaches its perfection, every individual human being (one earlier, one later) must have traversed, too", but interpreted it as our task here and now ... It is therefore a little odd when Royce suggests in his Lectures on Modern Idealism (150), and Jean Hyppolite duly echoes this suggestion in his Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel (1946, 23), that the stages of the Phenomenology "may be compared to different incarnations or transmigrations, as it were, of the world spirit". This idea shows some esprit but misses the crucial demand on the reader to "pass through the contents of the educational stages of the general spirit, but as forms that have long been outgrown by the spirit, as stages of a way that has been prepared and evened for him".

First of all, this is a misleading sketch of Hyppolite's position, for on page 43 of the above-mentioned book Hyppolite states that "Le problème que se pose la Phénoménologie n'est donc pas le problème de l'histoire du monde, mais le problème de l'éducation de l'individu singulier qui doit nécessairement se former au savoir en prenant conscience de ce que Hegel nomme sa substance." Secondly, this attempt at a dichotomy is indeed a misleading one. Both of these are essential to the Phen. On the one hand, if the stages of the Phen. were not "incarnations of the world spirit", the result, i.e., the Absolute, would have no relationship at all with the rest of the Phen. And whatever those stages were, if they were not the "incarnations of the world spirit", it would be impossible for one to reach the level of the Absolute by working through the Phen. On the other hand, if the Phen. were not the attempt to educate the individual, but rather merely the account of the history of Spirit, then Hegel would still be confronted with the individual at the level of ordinary consciousness which would exist over against the Absolute.

16. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 40; Baillie, op. cit., p. 86f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 25. Kaufmann points out that this phrase was one of the revisions that Hegel had made of the first edition of the Phen. Unfortunately, Kaufmann thinks that "the addition impairs the passage". (Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 41) Rather, it



seems essential here. Hegel must show the individual that the standpoint of the Absolute exists in him. This is to show that the individual can indeed reach the Absolute and that he does not have to "leave" his everyday existence for the "heavenly" Absolute. The Absolute, being actual in contemporary Spirit, encompasses every form of life.

17. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 40; Baillie, op. cit., p. 86f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 25.

### Chapter III

1. Heidegger, Hegel's Concept of Experience, p. 18; Baillie, op. cit., p. 139; Hegel, op. cit., p. 70.
2. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 19; Baillie, op. cit., p. 139f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 70.
3. Heidegger, ibid.; Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid. One may think that Hegel has contradicted himself here (and even more so later when he talks about the object of sense-consciousness) when he talks about the object of thought existing outside of thought. After all, does not the standpoint of the Absolute show one that the object of thought is as much thought as it is object? (See the discussion of the Absolute in Chapter II.) How can there be an object of thought existing totally and completely outside of thought? As we shall see shortly, the object as existing outside of thought is but a moment in the dialectical process of thought. In other words, consciousness discovers that the object, which at one point seems to exist independently, is really an object-for-thought. The object is not really an independently existing object.
4. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 20; Baillie, op. cit., p. 140f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 71.
5. Heidegger, ibid.; Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
6. "the same consciousness which we are observing": Which consciousness is it that we are observing? From what Hegel has said about the individual and Spirit, it would seem that the level of consciousness we are observing at any particular time will be one of the levels of consciousness that have occurred in the history of man. But, then, who does the actual examination? It would





seem that we can re-enact the examination only because the particular level of consciousness had already done it sometime in the past. We cannot pinpoint the exact examining "procedure" in history, but the examination had to have happened in some form in order for the next level of consciousness to appear. This necessity will be discussed shortly.

7. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 21; Baillie, op. cit., p. 141; Hegel, op. cit., p. 72.
8. Heidegger, ibid.; Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
9. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 14; Baillie, op. cit., p. 135f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 67.
10. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 22; Baillie, op. cit., p. 141; Hegel, op. cit., p. 72.
11. Note that "moment" does not refer to time. Rather, it refers to a particular aspect of a Gestalt of consciousness, i.e., either the knowledge "side" of the Gestalt or the truth "side" of it.
12. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 22f; Baillie, op. cit., p. 142; Hegel, op. cit., p. 72f.
13. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 23; Baillie, op. cit., p. 142f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 73.
14. Heidegger, ibid.; Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
15. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 23f; Baillie, op. cit., p. 143; Hegel, ibid.
16. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 25; Baillie, op. cit., p. 143f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 74.
17. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 24f; Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
18. Kaufmann (2), op. cit., p. 12; Baillie, op. cit., p. 70f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 12. Hyppolite thinks that there are two (inner) necessities in this process of reflection.

C'est pourquoi la nécessité de l'expérience que fait la conscience se présente sous une double lumière, ou plutôt il y a deux nécessités, celle de la négation de l'objet effectuée par la conscience elle-même dans son expérience, dans l'épreuve de son savoir, celle de





l'apparition de l'objet nouveau qui se façonne à travers l'expérience antérieure ... Cette deuxième nécessité n'appartient qu'au philosophe qui repense le développement phénoménologique ... (Hyppolite, op. cit., p. 29.)

This latter necessity is, of course, the necessity of the relationship between the new and old object and the new and old knowledge. The first necessity seems to be a necessity for the consciousness that is doing the examining as well as it is for the philosopher. It seems that for a particular consciousness, when it sees its former object of knowledge disappearing under examination, it also sees that a new object of knowledge necessarily arises when the former one dissolves. However, this consciousness does not see the necessary relationship between the new and old objects.

In regard to this point on the necessity of knowledge (the necessity seen by the phenomenological viewer), it is interesting to note here that the principal difference between philosophy and mathematics for Hegel is this necessity. In mathematics, according to Hegel, one has to know the result, the end point, of the mathematical demonstration in order to see the necessity of each step. This for Hegel is an extraneous necessity. In philosophy the phenomenological viewer can see the necessary connection between each step as he is viewing the progress without knowing the result of the whole process. Indeed, to bring in again the individual at the level of ordinary consciousness, this individual must see the necessity of the progression to the Absolute without presuming the Absolute as a result; otherwise, after the process was finished he could say that the result was achieved only because one presupposed the end point at the beginning. In other words, he could say that one attained the level of the Absolute only because one presumed it at the start. Hegel, on the contrary, wants to show that the standpoint of natural consciousness necessarily leads one to the Absolute without one having to assume it at the beginning.

#### Chapter IV

1. Baillie, op. cit., p. 149; Hegel, op. cit., p. 79.
2. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.



3. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
4. Baillie, op. cit., p. 151; Hegel, op. cit., p. 81.
5. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
6. Baillie, op. cit., p. 152; Hegel, op. cit., p. 82.
7. Baillie, op. cit., p. 153; Hegel, ibid.
8. Baillie, op. cit., p. 154; Hegel, op. cit., p. 83.
9. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, op. cit., p. 83f.
10. Baillie, op. cit., p. 156; Hegel, op. cit., p. 85.
11. Baillie, op. cit., p. 157; Hegel, op. cit., p. 86.
12. Baillie, op. cit., p. 162; Hegel, op. cit., p. 89.
13. Baillie, op. cit., p. 163; Hegel, op. cit., p. 90.
14. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
15. Baillie, op. cit., p. 169; Hegel, op. cit., p. 95.
16. Baillie, op. cit., p. 170; Hegel, ibid.
17. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, op. cit., p. 96.
18. Baillie, op. cit., p. 171; Hegel, ibid.
19. Baillie, op. cit., p. 172; Hegel, op. cit., p. 97.
20. Baillie, op. cit., p. 175; Hegel, op. cit., p. 100.
21. Baillie, op. cit., p. 183; Hegel, op. cit., p. 105.
22. Baillie, op. cit., p. 183; Hegel, op. cit., p. 105.
23. Hegel, op. cit., p. 100.
24. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, op. cit., p. 105.
25. Baillie, op. cit., p. 185; Hegel, op. cit., p. 107.
26. Baillie, op. cit., p. 188; Hegel, op. cit., p. 109.
27. Baillie, op. cit., p. 189; Hegel, op. cit., p. 110.
28. Baillie, op. cit., p. 190; Hegel, ibid.



29. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
30. Baillie, op. cit., p. 194f; Hegel, op. cit., p. 114.
31. Baillie, op. cit., p. 195; Hegel, ibid.
32. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, op. cit., p. 114f.
33. Baillie, op. cit., p. 196; Hegel, op. cit., p. 115.
34. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
35. Baillie, op. cit., p. 198; Hegel, op. cit., p. 117.
36. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
37. Baillie, op. cit., p. 202; Hegel, op. cit., p. 120.
38. Baillie, op. cit., p. 203; Hegel, op. cit., p. 121.
39. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
40. Baillie, ibid.; Hegel, ibid.
41. Baillie, op. cit., p. 210; Hegel, op. cit., p. 126.  
 It may seem that the essence of Absolute Knowledge (i.e., the object is as much consciousness as it is object) is revealed here at the end of this section on the Understanding. For at this point consciousness has discovered that it decides what is to be explained in the phenomenal world. However, and one can follow this in the Phen., this consciousness which becomes aware of itself as consciousness (i.e., this self-consciousness) now confronts another self-consciousness. There is still something "beyond" it, viz., this other self-consciousness.

## Chapter V

1. Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, pp. 169 - 259.
2. Kojève, op. cit., p. 171f.
3. Kojève, op. cit., p. 175.
4. Kojève, op. cit., p. 176.





5. Kojève, op. cit., p. 179.
6. Ibid.
7. Kojève, op. cit., p. 175.
8. Kojève, op. cit., p. 176.
9. Kojève, op. cit., pp. 171, 185.
10. Kojève, op. cit., p. 185.
11. Kojève, op. cit., p. 171.
12. Kojève, op. cit., p. 185.
13. Kojève, op. cit., p. 185f.
14. Kojève, op. cit., p. 171.
15. Kojève, op. cit., p. 191.
16. Ibid.
17. See Chapter III above, p. 21.





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